

2026 Freshman Minimester Information Packet

Dear Parents and Guardians:

The 2026 Freshman Field Research camping trip (the Freshman Minimester) is planned for the week of April 20 - 24, 2026. This trip has always been a treasured, required activity for all students at Richmond Community High School. All ninth-grade students and transfer tenth-grade students will depart from our school for a week of camping, history, and ecological studies on the Chesapeake Bay. Students will experience valuable hands-on learning, make new friendships, practice leadership, and build independence and confidence. Please review the attached information with your scholar.

The cost for this trip is \$400 per person. This fee pays for all costs associated with the trip, including equipment, transportation, food, and tours and activities.

- 1) Please be sure that your child has joined the Freshman Class Canvas class. ALL FORMS, links, checklists and reminders will also be posted there, as will our Minimester Newsletter!**
- 2) Please use the “Register-Camp” QR code on the LEFT to register your student for the trip no later than November 30, 2025.**
- 3) Please use the “Payment-Camp” QR code on the RIGHT to make your first \$100.00 payment no later than November 30, 2025.** Payments for all students will be made electronically via the Friends of RCHS Camping Trip webpage; you will use this same QR code for future payments.



QR code for REGISTRATION



QR code for PAYMENT

If you have any difficulties or questions about online registration and payment, please call the school for further assistance.

If your family needs assistance in covering costs, you may request a **scholarship application** when registering your student and/or making the first payment. All students will be expected to pay at least \$100.00 which includes the \$100.00 nonrefundable first payment.

Additionally, your child may choose to bring ***no more than \$40.00*** in cash on this trip as we may have an opportunity to purchase a snack or souvenir when we are in one town. **If you are interested in donating or assisting with fundraising to help sponsor our campers, this information is on the Friends of RCHS Camping Trip website.**

Information and Reminders

Name of activity:	Freshman Environmental Field Research Camping Trip		
Date of activity:	4/20/2026 - 4/24/2026		
Purpose of activity:	To reinforce biological and ecological concepts and laboratory skills through hands-on field research; to engage and support students' knowledge of Virginia and American history through interaction with the culture of the Chesapeake Bay.		
Objective:	Bio.1a., i., m. Bio. 2a., Bio. 8a.-e.		
Destination:	Eastern Shore / Chesapeake Bay		
Departure DATE:	Monday, April 20, 2026	Return DATE:	Friday, April 24, 2026
Departure TIME:	9:00 A.M.	Return TIME:	6:00 P.M.
Sponsor(s):	Summer Schultz, Vincent Simone, Davide D'Urbino, Erick Harris, Celina Alvarez, Biruk Yigrem		
Emergency cell#:	Kenya Massenburg, (804) 837-5998		
Money Needed:	No more than \$40.00 cash for souvenirs (optional)		
Method of Transportation:	Chartered school bus		
Particular risks or hazards involved in the activity, if any:	Inherent risks with outdoor activities: scrapes, bruises, bug bites, allergies, etc.		
<u>Registration:</u> <u>Nov 30, 2025</u>	Complete the online registration and permission form no later than Nov 30, 2025. <u>Use the Registration QR code.</u>		
<u>Payment reminders:</u> <u>Nov. 30, 2025</u> <u>Dec. 31, 2025</u> <u>Jan. 31, 2026</u> <u>Feb. 28, 2026</u> <u>Assistance</u> <u>Nov. 30, 2025*</u>	The cost for this trip is \$400.00, due by Feb 28, 2026. This \$400 fee pays for all costs associated with the trip, including equipment, transportation, food, and tours. The first payment of \$100.00 is due no later than Nov 30, 2025; you may pay the entire fee at once or may make payments of at least \$100.00 per month by the last day of each month. <u>Use the Payment QR code.</u> Need-based fee assistance scholarships are available. <u>Scholarship applications are due by Nov 30, 2025.*</u> See Ms. Schultz for the application.		

school on APRIL 20, 2026	
<u>Camper Expectation Reminders:</u> SCORE and Freshman Minimester behavior expectations <u>NO TECH</u>	RCHS is under the auspices of the Richmond Public Schools; guidelines for all items, dress, and behavior are governed by the standards written in the <u>Student Code of Responsible Ethics (SCORE)</u>. See the RPS website to read the SCORE document. We encourage you to review the SCORE with your child, as there will be a no-tolerance policy in effect. Students will be sent home from the trip ("short-term removal from the classroom") for SCORE violation behaviors. <i>Some examples of SCORE violation behaviors include: interfering with learning; refusing to comply with requests of staff; possessing items (such as electronics and phones) that are inappropriate for the trip / distract from the educational activities; possessing drugs, alcohol, or weapons; bullying, taunting, vulgar language, uncivil and discourteous speech to another; using slurs; failure to respond to questions or requests by staff; engaging in reckless behavior that creates a risk of injury to self or others; and threatening or instigating violence, injury or harm to another.</i> As a reminder, this trip is completely ELECTRONICS-FREE, INTERNET-FREE, SCREEN-FREE, and PHONE-FREE. <u>Students MAY NOT bring any electronic devices including phones, smart watches, laptops, headphones/earbuds, tablets, handheld video games, radios, or similar other tech / "devices that distract."</u> All staff members will have cell phones at all times for contact in case of any emergency. Please do NOT send a phone, smartwatch, tablet, or other communication device with your child. Any technology found on students will be confiscated until we return to school.

2026 Freshman Minimester Camping Trip Packing List

RCHS will be providing all of the basic supplies: food and drink, tents, science equipment, cooking supplies, first aid, cleaning supplies, etc. YOU will need to provide supplies for your personal use.

Don't buy new things for this trip! Remember that you can borrow many of these items from an upperclassman or friend, or find them second-hand online or at local outdoor gear shops. Keep in mind that everything may get dirty and/or wet. **The RPS DRESS CODE and all regulations will be adhered to on this trip. NO student cell phones, electronic devices, radios, video games, or cameras are allowed (all staff will have cell phones for emergency contact).**

Bring ONLY these items - Extra stuff will take up space and be burdensome!

**The following items must be brought to school at least ONE WEEK BEFORE THE TRIP:
Bring in by April 13, 2026**

- ☐ **DO NOT wear or pack JEWELRY** (rings, hooped earrings, nice watches, bangles/bracelets, necklaces, anklets, etc.). **DO NOT BRING VALUABLES!!!**
- ☐ **SLEEPING BAG:** store inside of a heavy-duty trash bag, and clearly LABEL the bag with your name. If you would like, you may bring a small blanket (recommended!) and/or pillow, but it must be able to be rolled up *inside of the sleeping bag*.
- ☐ **SOFT DUFFLE BAG** to pack everything else in: **medium size, no larger than 22 inches long, and no heavier than 30 lbs when fully packed.** NO suitcases, Army bags (top-loading style), or wheeled luggage. **Bring your PACKED duffle bag to school at least ONE WEEK before the trip.**

See the packing list for the DUFFLE BAG below.

- ☐ **Line the duffle bag with a heavy-duty trash bag!** You will pack all of your belongings inside of this layer to ensure everything is **waterproof!!!!**
- ☐ 2 pairs of old, comfy jeans or sweatpants that you don't mind getting wet or dirty
- ☐ 3-4 short-sleeved t-shirts; one should be your RCHS t-shirt!
- ☐ 2 long-sleeved sweatshirts, fleeces or hoodies
- ☐ 2 pairs of loose, comfortable shorts
- ☐ Undergarments to last the week, plus 2 extra
- ☐ 6-8 pairs of socks
- ☐ 1 jacket, coat or warm windbreaker (it gets very chilly at night and on the boats)
- ☐ 1 winter hat

- ☐ 1 pair of winter gloves
- ☐ 1 set pajamas/clothes to sleep in (NO footie/onesie PJs as they make bathroom use difficult)
- ☐ 1 set clothes to wear in the water:
 - ☐ Trunks or athletic shorts and a t-shirt
 - ☐ OR one-piece suit, or tankini and trunks/bottoms
 - ☐ **No bikinis or strapless suits**
- ☐ 1 pair* of old sneakers or closed-toe, tie-on athletic/outdoor footwear (they will get wet and dirty) *Note: you will also be wearing a **second pair of sneakers on the day of departure!**
- ☐ **NO BOOTS, CROCS, SLIDES, OR SANDALS WORN WHILE OUT ON THIS TRIP!**
HOWEVER: Bring a pair of slides or flip-flops to wear in the shower/when going to the bathrooms AT THE CAMPSITE ONLY.
- ☐ 1 towel (bring an old one!)
- ☐ 1 washcloth (old)
- ☐ **Toiletries - all SMALL (travel size) placed within a gallon ziplock bag that has YOUR NAME on it**
 - ☐ Deodorant
 - ☐ (optional) UNSCENTED lotion (scented lotions will attract bugs)
 - ☐ Toothbrush & toothpaste (travel tube or PART of a tube)
 - ☐ UNSCENTED small bar of soap, in a smaller ziplock bag
 - ☐ Disposable (unscented or light scent only) baby/bath wipes – you only need a SMALL package!
 - ☐ brush, comb, hair ties, scarf, and/or other small hair accessories
 - ☐ Menstrual supplies if you have periods - even if you don't expect your period this week
 - ☐ **DO NOT BRING PERFUMES, COLOGNES, OR BODY SPRAYS! These will attract bugs**
- ☐ 1 roll of toilet paper - tube taken out - placed in a ziplock bag
- ☐ 4 heavy-duty trash bags as backup waterproofing (roll up and use a rubber band or hairtie to hold them)
- ☐ 4-6 extra gallon-size ziplock bags (roll up and use a rubber band to hold them)
- ☐ 3-4 grocery store bags or small trash bags for carrying wet items, trash (roll, rubber band)
- ☐ **Dishes and utensils packed in a gallon ziplock bag with YOUR NAME on the label.** NO paper plates, napkins, plastic silverware, disposable plastic cups or bowls, or ceramic/glass!
 - ☐ 1 fork and 1 spoon; NO KNIVES!
 - ☐ 2 plastic bowls to eat from (heavy-duty, NOT disposable)
 - ☐ 1 plastic cup (heavy-duty, NOT disposable)

The following items must be brought to school with you THE MORNING OF THE TRIP: APRIL 20, 2026: be here between 8:30-9:00 AM if you are not riding the bus!

- ☐ **Backpack:** similar to the one you use for school - NO frame backpacks! String backpacks are not recommended as they will cut into your shoulders when carrying all day.

- ☐ **Lunch, snacks, & a drink for the first day of travel** - in your backpack

NOTE: To reduce trash, ALL food and drink must be consumed or disposed of before ARRIVAL at the campsite. NO FOOD OR DRINK ITEMS, other than your Day 1 lunch, will be brought from home! No food, gum or candy in your tent - this will attract wildlife, who may destroy your tent!!!

- ☐ **In the BACKPACK, pack the following:**

- ☐ 5-6 pencils and pens
- ☐ 1 medium-sized flashlight, with EXTRA BATTERIES. NO flashlight/radio combinations.
- ☐ 2 bandannas
- ☐ 1 baseball cap/ sun visor/bucket hat
- ☐ If you wear GLASSES: EYEGLASS CASE. ALSO recommended: put an eyeglass FISHING / SPORT STRAP on your glasses.
- ☐ **A SEALABLE, NON-LEAKING water bottle - labeled with your name**
- ☐ Powder or liquid water bottle flavoring in a ziplock bag (if you don't like the taste of well water)
- ☐ A rain poncho/jacket with a hood (NO umbrellas; NO heavy rubber raincoats)
- ☐ In a labeled, one-gallon ziplock bag:
 - ☐ UNSCENTED sunblock of at least SPF 30; water-resistant is best
 - ☐ Insect repellent (NOT a big spray can: get a travel-size container. NO aerosol sprays: soft sticks, pump bottles, or lotions are best.) Cutter's, OFF, and Skin-So-Soft (Avon) are all good brands.
 - ☐ Tissues, chapstick, and sunshades

- ☐ Optional: a folding fan → Nice to cool down!

- ☐ Optional: a small set of personal art supplies such as drawing pencils, colored pencils, or a small watercolor kit → Nice to have if you enjoy making art, especially for journal entries

- ☐ Optional: book to read, deck of cards → Nice to relax before lights out, or play with friends!

These items will be given to you on the DAY OF DEPARTURE. You must put these in your backpack and keep track of them on your own:

- ☐ A labeled, one-gallon ziplock bag with YOUR NAME written on it. It will contain
 - ☐ Your lab log journal provided by RCHS
 - ☐ pencil and pen

WHAT TO WEAR THE DAY OF DEPARTURE (APRIL 20, 2026)

- ☐ Wear a **SHORT protective hairstyle or just your natural hair!** Long extensions and braids will hold onto sand, water, and leaves, and be very hot and heavy.
- ☐ Wear your **second pair of old sneakers** or closed-toe, tie-on athletic/outdoor footwear (NO BOOTS, SLIDES OR SANDALS)
- ☐ **Dress for the weather:** wear layers so you can take off outer layers as it gets warm, and put them back on if it gets cold!
- ☐ Remember your **lunch and packed backpack.**
- ☐ Your **duffle bag and your sleeping bag should already have been brought in** last week!
- ☐ **NO ELECTRONICS.** No phones, earbuds, smart watches, tablets, smart glasses, handheld games, laptops, etc. ***If you choose to violate this rule, the device will be confiscated, and your parents will be called to come get you. Staff will have our phones at all times for any emergencies.***
- ☐ You can bring up to \$30.00 in cash if you choose; you may want to buy a souvenir at one of the museums we will visit. You will not NEED any money.

Be ready for all kinds of exciting experiences! Whether there is rain or sunshine, we will be doing:

- “Leave No Trace” outdoor etiquette
- Group activities, tours, walks, canoeing, and boat rides
- Outdoor field studies in wetlands, marshes, forests, and beaches
- Camp chores like cooking, cleaning, and building fires
- Journaling about our experiences and activities
- Watching, identifying, and even meeting wildlife at nature centers
- Building meaningful friendships and memories with your classmates
- Learning to be more independent, self-sufficient and confident
- Learning about the ecosystems, history and people of the Chesapeake Bay through REAL LIFE, HANDS-ON EXPERIENCES!